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ABSTRACT

This teacher guidebook is intended to be a comprehensive resource for second language teachers wishing to use and teach language learning strategies to their students. It is intended to be used by both English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers and teachers of such foreign languages as German, French, and Spanish to American native speakers of English. It is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 contains workshop handouts and forms covering such topics as learning strategy models, ways to integrate strategies seamlessly into classroom instruction, immersion self-efficacy questionnaires, students' and teachers' evaluations of strategies of instruction, learning strategy teaching checklists, examples of poor and good strategy use, ideas for introducing specific strategies, and a student self-evaluation of strategies use. Part 2 is comprised of excerpts from the National Capitol Language Resource Center (NCLRC) Language Resource. This part is subdivided into 3 sections: an overview of learning strategies, a look at specific strategies, and an examination of the basis of research on learning strategies. (KFT)

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THE LEARNING STRATEGIES INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE

INCLUDING WORKSHOP HANDOUTS AND EXCERPTS FROM THE NCLRC LANGUAGE RESOURCE

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PART I:
LEARNING STRATEGIES WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

WHAT IS A STRATEGY?

A STRATEGY IS A TECHNIQUE YOU CAN USE TO HELP YOU LEARN BETTER.

YOU CAN CHOOSE STRATEGIES THROUGHOUT A LANGUAGE TASK TO HELP YOU PERFORM BETTER.

LEARNING STRATEGIES MODEL

PLAN		
Strategy name	**Question student asks self**	**Definition**
GOAL-SETTING	What is my personal objective? What strategies can help me?	Develop personal objectives, identify purpose of task, choose appropriate strategies
DIRECTED ATTENTION	What distractions can I ignore? How can I focus my attention?	Decide in advance to focus on particular tasks and ignore distractions
ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	What do I already know about this topic/task?	Think about and use what you already know to help do the task
PREDICT/ BRAINSTORM	What kinds of information can I predict for this task? What might I need to do?	Anticipate information to prepare and give yourself direction for the task
REGULATE		
SELF-MONITOR	Do I understand this? Am I making sense?	Check your understanding to keep track of how you're doing and to identify problems
SELECTIVE ATTENTION	What should I pay most attention to? Is the information important?	Focus on specific aspects of language or situational details
DEDUCTION	Which rules can I apply to help complete the task?	Apply known rules
VISUALIZE	Can I imagine a picture or situation that will help me understand?	Create an image to represent information to help you remember and check your understanding
CONTEXTUALIZE/ PERSONALIZE	How does this fit into the real world?	Think about how to use material in real life, relate information to background knowledge
COOPERATE	How can I work with others to do this?	Work with others to help build confidence and to give and receive feedback
SELF -TALK	I can do this! What strategies can I use to help me?	Reduce anxiety by reminding self of progress, resources available, and goals
PROBLEM-SOLVE		
INFERENCE/ SUBSTITUTE	Can I guess what this means? Is there another way to say/do this?	Make guesses based on previous knowledge
QUESTION FOR CLARIFICATION	What help do I need? Who/Where can I ask?	Ask for explanation and examples
RESOURCE	What information do I need? Where can I find more information about this?	Use reference materials
EVALUATE		
VERIFY	Were my predictions and guesses right? Why or why not?	Check whether your predictions/guesses were right
SUMMARIZE	What is the gist/main idea of this?	Create a mental, oral, written summary
CHECK GOALS	Did I meet my goal?	Decide whether you met your goal
SELF-EVALUATE	How well did I do? Did I choose good strategies? What could I do differently next time?	Judge how well you did, judge the effectiveness of your strategies

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GETTING STARTED

The goal of strategies instruction is to make students more aware of how they learn and how they can learn more efficiently and effectively. Teaching strategies does not mean that you have to develop a separate set of "strategies lessons" or "strategies activities" and then try to find a time to teach them. Instead, discussions about students' strategies and thought processes should become a natural part of regular class activities.

The way you introduce strategies is primarily up to you. We suggest that you begin with open-ended class discussions on these topics:

•Roles of teacher and learner
Begin the first day of class by defining the roles of teacher and learner. Students have to be responsible for their own learning. The teacher models how to use the language and helps direct students, but the teacher cannot learn for students. Use the following analogies:

Class as orchestra--Teacher is the conductor; students are the ones who have to play the music.
Class as football team--Teacher can coach students about good plays to make, but on the field, the players have to make decisions for themselves.

•Goals in being able to use the language
Ask students why they're studying this language. Try to get beyond the response, "It's required." Brainstorm ideas in the following areas: Professional (Can you use it in your future career?), Educational (Do you want to study it in college?), Social (Do you have friends who speak this language?), Personal (Is your heritage related to this language? Do you want to travel to a target country?)

•Student self-assessment
If the class is above level 1, have students informally assess their own ability in different language skills. From the beginning, students need to realize they are responsible for their own learning. Identifying strengths and weaknesses is a good step in becoming a more active learner.
For level 1 students, ask them what areas they think will be difficult or easy for them in learning this language (based on other foreign language learning experiences or first language experiences).

•Strategies that students find useful
Introduce the idea that students use strategies to help them understand and produce language. Ask students to brainstorm strategies they use for various language tasks, and have them talk about why different strategies have been helpful to them. If students do not have previous foreign language experience, you can ask them what kinds of things they do to help them learn in other content areas, then see which of those strategies they think might apply to learning a new language.

Let students know that as part of learning the target language, they will also be introduced to some strategies to help them learn more effectively. Let students know that everyone learns in different ways, and that they need to be active in finding what works best for them.

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GUIDELINES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION

INTEGRATE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR REGULAR COURSEWORK.

Effective strategies instruction is not an "add-on" or a separate content area; rather, strategies instruction is used to support language learning and to accomplish authentic, meaningful language tasks. Although some initial explanations are needed, most of strategies instruction should occur "on-line" while working on language tasks.

TEACH STRATEGIES TO STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS.

Although strategies are especially important for less proficient students, even the best students don't use strategies as thoughtfully and flexibly as they could. Less advanced students may need more modeling and coaching. More advanced students need faster "scaffolding"--releasing control to them by providing less explicit cues to use strategies they've learned. You also may find different strategies more appropriate at different language levels.

SELECT APPROPRIATELY CHALLENGING MATERIAL.

Lesson materials should represent authentic language tasks. Select material that represents a slight stretch for most of your students. If the task is too easy, students will not need strategies; if it is too difficult, even appropriate strategies may not lead to success. The point is for students to experience the benefits of the strategies; they are not likely to apply strategies unless they believe the strategies help **them**.

DRAW ON STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNING STRATEGIES.

Preface explicit strategies instruction by asking students what strategies they already use for tasks in the language. You can also draw on their knowledge of strategies they use for other subjects, asking how these strategies might be modified to apply in the language class. As you continue teaching strategies, review with students what they have already learned.

EXPLICITLY TEACH THE PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES.

Present the Model of Strategic Comprehension and Production, emphasizing that good language learners flexibly use the four processes--Plan, Regulate, Problem-Solve, Evaluate--when they encounter a language task. Within the context of these four processes, directly explain each strategy and how to use it. Explicit instruction can occur not only as an introduction to a lesson, but also on-line, in response to cues in the task or student comments. Use the term "strategy" and the names of the strategies (in the target language or in English) to emphasize strategic thinking. Emphasize that although students may use some or all of these strategies unconsciously, it is important to be aware of strategies; if students have explicit understanding of these and other strategies, they can consciously choose appropriate strategies when faced with a difficult task.

MODEL STRATEGIES USE FREQUENTLY.

Verbalize your thought processes during language tasks as part of daily lessons. You can do this by thinking aloud while you work on a language task. After you have explained the concept of a think-aloud, you can do brief think-alouds to introduce new tasks or to guide students through challenging material. When the class discusses or practices strategies, you can interject comments about strategies you find helpful for similar tasks. Point out that the strategies you discuss are just another possible approach, not necessarily the best way for everyone.

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COACH STUDENTS TO USE STRATEGIES, GIVING FREQUENT CUES & FEEDBACK.

Have students think aloud, talking (or writing) about their thought processes while working on language tasks. Early in strategies instruction, frequently prompt students to choose strategies for a task; if they have trouble choosing, you can suggest specific strategies. Give students feedback when they use strategies, praising them for being strategic. As students become more independent in using strategies, fade your prompts, making cues less frequent and less explicit.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS' LEARNING PROCESSES, NOT JUST PRODUCTS.

Put less emphasis on "correct" content/language production and more emphasis on thought processes leading to students' responses. Probe to find out how students arrived at their answers. Point out when students use strategies--especially when they seem unaware that they did something strategic. For wrong answers, find out where the student's logic went wrong to help avoid future mistakes. Use these opportunities to remind students of effective strategies.

EMPHASIZE METACOGNTION: WHY EACH STRATEGY WORKS & WHEN TO USE IT.

Explicitly discuss why each strategy can improve students' understanding, production, and learning. After explaining a strategy, ask students why they think the strategy would help. Supplement students' explanations by telling them the theory behind the strategy (as in the Why explanations given with the strategy definitions/examples). Acknowledge that different strategies work better for different people and for different tasks. Talk about the kinds of tasks, situations, and purposes for which each strategy is more or less useful. This can be done in a formal explanation or discussion, but it also should occur informally when a student uses a strategy. For example, you can ask, "Why was that helpful for this task? Are there times when that strategy works better for you or times when it doesn't work so well?"

EMPHASIZE THE COORDINATION OF A REPERTOIRE OF STRATEGIES.

Discuss the importance of having a flexible repertoire or "menu" of strategies for language learning. Remind students that different strategies can work for the same task. If one strategy doesn't work for a student, encourage him or her to try another. Use the Model of Strategic Comprehenson and Production to organize individual strategies; remind students that good learners Plan, Regulate, Problem-solve, and Evaluate **recursively** during a given task; these are not just linear steps to follow. Let students know that explicit instruction in strategies can help them become better language learners because it helps them add strategies to their repertoire, makes them more aware of the strategies available to them, and encourages them to evaluate which strategies are most effective for them on different kinds of tasks.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO EVALUATE STRATEGIES.

Give students the chance to evaluate how well their strategies support their language learning. Evaluation can be included in class discussions on the value of using various strategies for a given task, or a more general discussion of each strategy's appropriateness for a variety of purposes. Also emphasize the benefit of strategies on-line while students are working on regular classwork; for example, when you see a student using a strategy, ask how it helps. In addition, conducting "mini-experiments" can help students gain valuable insights into the benefits of strategy use. For example, some students can use a newly-taught strategy on an assigned task while others complete the task in the way they always have. At the conclusion, students can compare the outcomes. Another way is for students to try a task without a strategy, then try the same or similar task with the strategy. Self-evaluation is a necessary step to students becoming self-regulated learners.

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WAYS TO INTEGRATE STRATEGIES SEAMLESSLY INTO YOUR INSTRUCTION

Scaffold Instruction to Avoid Repetitiveness

Strategies instruction should not stand out as something separate from language learning. Although introducing and defining new strategies is explicit, it is important to "scaffold" instruction by turning the responsibility over to students. Students will become bored if the class uses the same strategy terms over and over again. Strategies terms can be important for giving students a handle on what the strategy really means. When students understand and use the strategy, you can talk about it in other ways--for example, using the students' terms to talk about the strategies, or simply describing the thought process without giving it a name. For example, here are some ways students describe inferencing: Use common sense to make sense out of it when I don't understand: use context; try to figure out what words mean based on words I know.

Make Thought Process Discussions a Natural Part of the Class

Most of strategies instruction should be based on a habit of focusing on students' thought processes. This doesn't have to be done in formal student think-alouds. Rather, each day you can frequently ask students the reasoning behind their responses.. Here are some sample questions (You may want to teach students these or other questions in the target language):

What are you going to do? How did you come up with that? What makes you think so? Whatever you thinking about? How can you solve your problem? What led to that decision?

Do this for both right and wrong answers, better and worse usage--Students should not see "What makes you think so" as analogous to "wrong answer" or even "good answer." Get in the habit of praising good thinking over good answers/outcomes. When students seem to be off-base in comprehension or production or give an incorrect response in class, focusing on thinking can reveal flaws in logic or inappropriate choice/application of strategies. Conversely, examining thinking behind insightful responses can give all students a model of effective thinking and can help good students be more aware of what helps them learn.Here's an example of **focusing on thought processes** as part of content instruction--

Student: (Trying to translate title) Ailment of the Gods?
Teacher: Why are you shaking your head?
Student: Dioses, well dio is god, and I can't imagine...dios is um...
Teacher: So, what are you thinking about as you read this?

Pick up on self-corrections and ask how student decided to make the change:

Student: "Al fin me encontre frente al Museo de Historia Natural." Finally or something he encountered, and I thought that meant forward, obviously not, in front of the History...Natural History Museum.
Teacher: Why do you say that? Why did you change your mind?
Student: It wasn't forward because it wouldn't make sense, and frente is kind of like front.

Point out any strategies you see students using.

"So it seems like you have a picture in your mind of what this would be like."

Emphasize the Value of Strategies Instruction

Make clear to students that strategies can help them reach overall long term goals in foreign language learning, not just a specific, immediate goal. (In other words, developing strategies can help you become an effective learner who has a variety of tools to aid learning and understanding, it's not just an activity the teacher asks you to use for a particular vocabulary list or understanding a specific paragraph.) Also point out to students that the strategies they are learning in this class can help not only in language but in other subject areas, and in any situation where greater understanding is needed (interpersonal communication, life decision-making,...).

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TEACHERS' IDEAS FOR INTRODUCING SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

The Role of Explicit Instruction

Getting students to talk about their thought processes helps make them more aware of the strategies they are already using. This awareness is important because it can enable students to call upon those strategies when they are facing difficulties. In addition, the teacher can explicitly introduce strategies that the students can use to help them even more. Some students may have never thought of using the strategy before. Others may have used the strategy without really thinking about it. Explicit instruction is a way to make sure students are aware of the choices they have for learning, understanding, and dealing with problems.

Here are some ways teachers have explicitly introduced particular strategies to their students. These lessons emphasize student choice from a repertoire of strategies, as well as student evaluation of how helpful the strategies are. They also encourage students to try out the strategies for themselves.

Speaking

Display a poster in class with speaking strategies. Posters help students remember what the strategies mean. You can also use the posters to remind students to use the strategies. Or when a student is deep into a speaking problem that a particular strategy might resolve, just point to the appropriate strategy. Better yet, ask the student to choose a strategy from the list. Encourage the student to evaluate how well the strategy worked. Sample Poster:

No English! Work only in Spanish (or Russian, Japanese, German, Chinese, French...).
When role-playing, stay in your role.
Stay within your means. Use what you know.
Pick up clues from the other speaker. Answer by repeating part of the question.
If you don't know it, substitute. Think of another way of saying it.
Monitor your listeners. Are they following you?
Monitor yourself. Am I making sense?
Be flexible. Try another approach.
Ask questions.
Bueno, HY, BOT, in other words, use fillers in the target language.

Writing

Give students the following introduction to the strategy of substitution:

Substitution is a very useful strategy when you're writing in a foreign language. If you don't remember how to say something specific in the language, you can substitute by writing what you do know how to say. Here are some ways you can substitute--

Use a synonym / Use the opposite (not nice instead of mean)
Describe what the unknown thing is, or what it does (e.g., a machine that washes clothes)
Use a more general word (e.g., animal instead of rabbit)
Change your plan a little, if you can (write about your kitchen, instead of your basement)
Change the idea totally, and make a new plan (change to another the topic).

Give students a list of words/phrases in the target language (e.g., tree, earth, nice, to study, grandfather, He has a lot of money, Anne is the smartest girl in class, The weather is pleasant).

Have students try to develop two substitutions for each word/phrase. Have students share their substitutions, and ask what they did to substitute.

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Reading

Divide the class into two sections. Give both sections the same text, but for one of the groups, white out the title and exclude any pictures and captions. Have students read the text (alone or in small groups) and write a summary. Ask a few people from each section to share their summary. Tell students that one section saw the text without the title or pictures. Ask students if they think it would be fair to expect the same comprehension from students who saw the title and pictures as from those who didn't. Ask students why they think seeing the title and pictures could make a difference.

Talk about how the students used that information to help them understand. Summarize by saying that looking at the title and pictures helps activate your background knowledge so you can make predictions about what to expect. Point out that having predictions gives a reference point, something against which they can check their understanding.

Listening

Without telling students what they are going to listen to, play a tape of a weather report. Ask them what they understood from the tape. Ask students why they think understanding the tape was difficult. Now tell students that what they just heard was a weather report. Tell them you will play it again. Tell them that before listening, you want them to make predictions of the kinds of information they would expect to hear in a weather report, based on their background knowledge. Have them brainstorm words in the target language that they might hear. Encourage them to listen for the words they predicted and for other familiar words to help them get the main points of the weather report. After playing the tape the second time, ask students what they were able to pick up. Did they catch any of the words they had predicted? Ask whether activating background knowledge, making predictions, and selectively attending to certain information helped their comprehension. If so, why?

Vocabulary Development

(Could be used to practice a set of vocabulary strategies that were introduced recently.)

Students need to learn some basic vocabulary for the theme, "Souvenirs." Put students in groups of 3 and give each group a different set of vocabulary items. The group chooses a vocabulary learning strategy. Each group then presents their list of words and models how to use the strategy. The rest of the class learns the set of words using the given strategy. This is a good way of letting students pick the strategies they find most helpful. The strategy may depend on the types of words. Concrete nouns lend themselves to visualization or using real objects. You can even supply students with real objects, if appropriate. The sounds of some words lend themselves more to key word method or making sound associations. For instance, in a Russian class one group taught the Russian word for amber, янтарь(yantar). They said, " янтарь sounds like a dinosaur from "Jurassic Park," where they used amber to make dinosaurs."

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EXCERPTS OF GOOD AND POOR STRATEGY USE

All students have some strategies for dealing with language tasks. Effective language learners have flexible, well-coordinated use a variety of strong strategies. They know how to choose strategies appropriate for the task. Poor learners may choose weak strategies, rely on the same strategies in all situations, and fail to recognize if their approach is suited to the task.

Good Strategy Use:	Poor Strategy Use:
If I don't know a word, I try to skip it and I go on and I try to see if the paragraph makes sense without the word, like a fill in the blank thing. After I finish a part I go back, and it usually makes sense or things fall into place. I try to find cognates. Sometimes they're false cognates of course, but if they make sense I use them. Actually if I really get stuck with a word, I look it up in a dictionary. Or if I have to write a presentation and I don't know a word, I also check the dictionary.	I have to look up a lot of words in the dictionary. Like when I read it, then I have to go back over it. And I have to get a really good idea of what the story's about. To get it all I have to translate all the words and then translate the story, and it takes me a long time. *(Student relies heavily on the dictionary, without trying alternative strategies. Student feels the need to understand every single word, getting bogged down in details.)*
I'm trying to translate directly but it's not really working, so I'm like picking out the key words that I do know and trying to fit them in according to what I've got. I'm trying to relate them (unfamiliar words) to anything I might have learned. I'm trying to reference them with the things I have learned for sure. I'm trying to associate them with something to see if I've done an association in my brain.	There are a lot of words I'm not really sure about so I'm going over the paragraph over and over again to see if I can figure what it's trying to say. *(Although rereading is effective in combination with other strategies, repeatedly rereading what has not been understood seems like a dead end.)*
Okay, back to his father--работал (phonetically--rabotal; means "work"). It sounds like a robot. Maybe he's an engineer or something (reads "a teacher in school"). School...so maybe...he teaches robotics at a school. ... (reads "Mama" работала). So here it is, that little работала thing. So maybe it's not robots, because I don't think they'd both be doing something with robots. ...Well here it is again, I want to know what that word is ... (interviewer tells student работать means "work"). Oh, okay, so he works at a school, and she works at a library.	Sometimes I think of something, but I'm not really sure, but I was always taught to go with your first idea 'cause if not, I don't know. Then if it doesn't make sense, I just pretend I never read it. ... Not just in foreign languages but with like multiple choice. They say your first idea is better and just stick with it. And I found that I made mistakes and I'd get even more mad than if I hadn't. So I just stick with the first idea. *(Poor use of skip: if new information doesn't fit original interpretation, I ignore it. This student also overgeneralized a strategy--what works for multiple choice test is ineffective for building story comprehension.)*
Association with different things like (goluboy) is like blue for boy. (Zelyony) is green--lonely. I try to remember what words go with what words in English by whatever means of association or referencing I use in my mind.	I read the list over and over again. *(Student relies on rote memorization to acquire vocabulary and seems unaware that other approaches might be more effective and efficient.)*

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LEARNING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GERMAN
[High School/University Level Sample Page]

Speaking German

Part of learning and using German is being able to speak it. In class you may have to answer questions, talk to classmates, give reports and summaries, and give information about yourself. Outside of class you might have conversations with native speakers and friends.

How often do you do each of the following to help yourself speak German?

S1. I decide my goal for speaking by thinking about what I want to communicate.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

...

S4. Before I start speaking, I brainstorm words and phrases I can use when talking.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

S5. I try to figure out if I'm not making sense to the listener so I can correct myself.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

S6. I focus on topics that I know how to talk about, and I use language structures I am familiar with, so that others can understand me.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

...

S9. I use real objects or act out the situation to illustrate and put into context what I am talking about.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

...

S12. If I don't know how to say something, I substitute what I do know how to say.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

S13. If I don't know how to say something, I ask a more proficient speaker how to say it.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

S14. If I don't how to say something, I look it up in reference materials (dictionary, textbook, computer program, etc.).
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

...

S17. After I speak, I rate how well I did.
Never *Rarely* *Occasionally* *Often*

IMMERSION SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SPANISH
(UPPER ELEMENTARY SAMPLE PAGE)

Reading Spanish

Pretend your teacher gives you something new to read in class today. For each question, circle the answer that tells how sure you are that you can do this while reading in Spanish.

R 1. **When you read in Spanish, can you figure out the most important information?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

R 2. **If you read something in Spanish in class today, can you answer questions about it?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

R 3. **When you read in Spanish, can you figure out what new Spanish words mean?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

R 4. **After you read something in Spanish, can you explain it to someone?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

R 5. **Can you understand written directions in Spanish?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

Listening to Spanish

Pretend you are listening to your teacher explain something in Spanish. For each question, circle the answer that tells how sure you are that you can do this when you listen to Spanish.

L 1. **When you listen to Spanish, can you figure out the most important thing the teacher is saying?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

L 2. **After you hear something in Spanish, can you answer questions about what you heard?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

L 3. **When you listen to Spanish, can you figure out what new Spanish words mean?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

L 4. **After you hear something in Spanish, can you explain it to someone?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

L 5. **Can you understand spoken directions in Spanish?**
No Way *Probably Not* *Maybe* *Probably* *Definitely*

TEACHING LEARNING STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

SELF-EVALUATION

Preparing

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	
☐	☐	☐	1. I ask students about the strategies they already use.
☐	☐	☐	2. I include activities such as think alouds and discussions to help students be aware of their strategies.

Presenting

☐	☐	☐	3. I choose strategies to teach by matching them with the task.
☐	☐	☐	4. I give the strategy(s) a name and explain it.
☐	☐	☐	5. I tell students why and when to use the strategy(s).
☐	☐	☐	6. I model how to use the strategy(s) on a task.

Practicing

☐	☐	☐	7. I choose challenging tasks for students.
☐	☐	☐	8. I give students opportunities to practice the strategies.
☐	☐	☐	9. I remind students to use a strategy they've just learned or to choose from the strategies they know.
☐	☐	☐	10. I emphasize students' thought processes by asking them how they figured something out.
☐	☐	☐	11. I point out any strategies I see students using.
☐	☐	☐	12. I praise good thinking more than correct answers.

Evaluating

☐	☐	☐	13. I encourage students to evaluate their own strategies use.
☐	☐	☐	14. I discuss with students which strategies they find most useful with the tasks practiced.
☐	☐	☐	15. I encourage students to independently choose strategies.
☐	☐	☐	16. I fade explicit learning strategies prompts when students take responsibility for the strategy.
☐	☐	☐	17. I evaluate how I teach strategies and revise appropriately.

Extending

☐	☐	☐	18. I talk with students about how they can use the strategies in other subjects and life situations.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES USE

Evaluation enables students to identify why and when strategies are effective. If students feel strategies are useful, then you can emphasize the relationship between strategies and the task. If students feel strategies don't help, then examine why (e.g., maybe the task was too easy; the strategy may not have been appropriate for the task, so choose another strategy; students may not feel comfortable using the strategy yet and they need to practice it more). Below are some suggestions for evaluating strategies.

CLASS FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION
After students have used strategies for a language task, lead a class discussion about whether strategies helped. The follow-up discussion can be brief, but it's important for students to be able to talk about their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of strategies.

STRATEGIES LEARNING LOG
Students can keep a diary of their strategy use. For instance, students write the name of a strategy in their diary-notebook, and then keep a record of when they use it, how they use it, and why it helps. Early in the instruction, you may want to give students examples of log entries on the chalkboard in the target language so they can learn terminology for discussing strategies. Students can copy these phrases into their notebooks so that they can later write entries in the target language on their own referring to the model.

MINI-EXPERIMENTS
The class can conduct experiments to see if strategies work. For instance, have students do a challenging task without strategies. Then give students a similar task, but instruct them to use appropriate strategies. Discuss whether it was easier to do the activity with or without the strategies. Another way is to have some students do an activity using strategies and other students do the same activity the way they normally would. Afterwards, students can compare their results on the task. Use your and your students' imaginations to create other mini-experiments.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE
Students individually jot down ideas about how a strategy helps them. Then they work with a partner or in small groups to discuss their ideas. Afterwards, students can share this information with the whole class. Students can do this immediately following an activity or can do it using information from their learning logs.

THINK ALOUD
As students work through a task, they say aloud what they are thinking. This process can make students aware of how well strategies are working for them. It also helps students realize that they can control their learning process by choosing appropriate strategies.

CHECKLIST
Before doing a task, give students a list of strategies and tell them to identify the ones they will use for the task. Afterwards, students can note which strategies were especially helpful. This activity also promotes independent use of strategies because students choose the strategies for the task.

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TEACHERS' EVALUATIONS OF STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION

The following excerpts are taken from teacher interviews that were conducted as part of a research study at the NCLRC. One purpose of the study was to find out if teachers believe that learning strategies instrucion helps develop more effective language learners. The following statements represent some participating teachers' thoughts about the benefits, challenges, and issues of strategies instruction.

BENEFITS

Teacher One: I think that teaching learning strategies can raise students one notch above where they were. For example, the good learners, once they learn a couple of these strategies, can really improve their reading and just make remarkable progress. The strategies help the weaker students in their comprehension. What we really try to do is get them away from translating from Spanish into English, word for word, and get them away from using the dictionary. These strategies have helped those weaker students. The students are letting themselves figure out things as they go, figure out things from context clues, visuals, other aids like in prediction using what you already know. That gives them a lot of confidence to go on.

Teacher Two: Students now know how to go about the language task. Before learning strategies instruction, they just thought, "Oh, the teacher has to translate all the words, and then I put them together." Now, it's a puzzle--I ask them questions. Now they expect that something has to be done before they work on the language task, like a preparation stage. And they're expecting this preparation stage all the time before they do the task.

Teacher Three: Sometimes they blurt out strategies without being prompted at all. A lot of times, they're the ones saying, "Use ojo" or, "Gosh, if you'd used gafas" or something like that. Every once in a while, when I start forgetting about the strategies, the students come out with them.

Teacher Four: I found that if I do conscious strategies instruction, the tests show the outcome is better. They learn more effectively.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

REGARDING HIGH ACHIEVERS AND STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION

Teacher One: The students who have more difficulty are grateful when you point out, "Well, you already know this." "Look, you've done this here, and you can do this again." I think that really works well with them. The more advanced students get impatient. They don't want to be told what to do. They say, "That's common sense."

Teacher Two: The A/B students hate strategies instruction. I guess it's like saying, "Okay, when you get in your car, open the door, sit down, and put on your seat belt." You know, it's just so innate for them that they're bored with it. But, you know, there's got to be a happy medium. They've got to learn to deal with the fact that they're in a class with slower people. I've got to make everyone achieve. So, I'm not hurting them, I'm just not challenging them.

Teacher Three: With the higher level students, they already know so many things, eventually they develop a type of a learning style for themselves. I don't think a level 4 student needs that much help from the teacher; they know how to do it. But, in level 1 they don't have any idea, and I think that time teacher if they know it well they can help student much better.

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REGARDING THE NEED TO START WITH A FEW STRATEGIES AND BUILD UP

Teacher One: I would say if you teach level 1 and you want to teach some strategies, begin with the a few basic ones, don't go into all the strategies--you'll just overwhelm the students. I would just pick a couple to use for the first level, maybe some additional ones to add for level 2, and then by level 3, they can have the whole gamut of strategies. But be very careful; be wise on how you present the strategies, and teach them at each level. If you do this, I think the students are able to handle them.

REGARDING THE NEED FOR STRATEGIES IN LOWER LEVELS

Teacher One: Strategies instruction is more important at the lower level because at the lower level students simply have to organize more information. There is so much information that students are often overwhelmed, and they are not organized and that time. The teacher can help students with learning strategies, so that student can organize whatever information they are given.

REGARDING HOW TO SCAFFOLD

Teacher One: Next year I plan on incorporating strategies instruction in different ways so that students are making a conscious decision to use different strategies. The strategies probably don't need to be taught as heavily; I just need to mention them often. For example, I think for the final I might let them have a strategy sheet. They won't have answers, just notes about how to figure out different things. Because this will be their second year in language, they're not going to need as much training, theoretically, if they got the training in the first year. So, I will have to guess how much to push it, because it's really hard to know where the line is between when you're boring them and when you're still teaching them something. And that's the line that I have to straddle next year.

Teacher Two: This year I presented learning strategies to the level 3 class. I did it at a very minimal level; not going into detail on all the different strategies. The students picked them up very easily. Now, of course, I am talking about the students who probably used strategies to begin with, but now they're using them more explicitly. For example, today I'm introducing some short stories. I will say to them: "Now, what are you going to do before you read the story?" and then, "What are you going to do as you start to read the story?" So, I'm going to again bring up the idea of strategies and see what they remember. In regards to the level 5 groups that were taught learning strategies two years ago, we still continue to use strategies in some sense in our discussion and in stories. Do we explicitly name time every time? No. But now I think they've really become more internalized.

REGARDING LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Teacher One: Well, in level one we usually teach culture in English, so I was thinking that if we start strategies instruction in English, it will then be easier to transfer that to the target language; for example, they will understand when you are saying "let's pay attention to key words, to the title, illustration, etc." I think using their native language first is the key. While the other way, you just show them something to read and right away it's something that's not very known; if you start in English, it'll be easier. Maybe the response will be more positive. They won't be afraid to make mistakes because they'll probably say, "Well, we know English".

Teacher Two: I think the use of the terminology in Spanish is critical, rather than using the English, and that should be used across the board.

Teacher Three: It's good to have the terminology in Spanish, but I don't think you should shy away from using English when presenting the strategies, especially with lower levels. They're going to have to use lots of English and it's a good idea because that means that later on they won't have to, especially if they have the terminology in Spanish. Maybe the initial explanation should be done in English. I personally feel that is fine because that's going to save time in the future, and save frustration for the students.

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Students' Evaluations of Strategies Instruction

The quotations below are excerpts from a research study conducted at the NCLRC. One purpose of the study was to find out wheter students thought that learning strategies could help develop better language learners.

Question: Is strategies instruction easy or difficult?

Student One: While I am in class doing a project in which we have to use the strategies, it is fairly easy. But, when I am doing my work alone, or at home, and I am not specifically told to use a strategy, I forget.

Student Two: Pretty easy, if you know what to look for.

Student Three: They are easy to understand but hard to do.

Student Four: It is easier to learn by using it a lot.

Student Five: Easiest is to have someone tell you, but the best is once you figure it out yourself.

Question: How helpful is strategies instruction?

Positive Comments	Negative Comments
(Helpful)...because some of the strategies I would never use unless someone reminded me.	It takes up a lot of time, and most people already use the strategies subconsciously. It doesn't help to think aloud.
(Helpful) ... especially if you practice them and then do them without thinking.	Also, different strategies are better for different people.
It is helpful to have a name for the strategies, but I was already using most of them subconsciously.	It is ok, but by the time we are in Sp 3, we already have our own learning strategy. They should be taught at the beginning of Sp so that they become habitual.
I think I understood the readings much better than I would have without the instruciton.	I like to figure it out on my own.
It helps me a lot and reinforces what I do that's good already.	

PART II: EXCERPTS FROM THE NCLRC LANGUAGE RESOURCE

A. AN OVERVIEW OF LEARNING STRATEGIES

PROFILE OF AN EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNER

Jennifer Kevorkian

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,1* February, 1997

There is no pleasure in teaching quite as great as finding the key to unlocking a student's learning. Learning strategies are techniques and thoughts students use to comprehend, produce, remember, and manage information. Appropriate use of strategies enables students to learn effectively and efficiently. We would like to share the strategies used by successful foreign language learners; thus providing a model on which teachers and material development experts can build.

The NCLRC conducted a three-year study on the use of learning strategies by high school language learners. Think aloud interviews were used to discover the language learning strategies exhibited and talked about by more and less effective learners as they worked through speaking and reading tasks. The following profile was created from think aloud interviews with effective high school Spanish learners.

Effective learners use strategies appropriately and flexibly. These students have a wide repertoire of strategies from which they consciously choose depending on the demands of the language task. They monitor their strategy use and are aware of whether a strategy is working or not. If a strategy is not helping, they are able to call upon another, perhaps more appropriate strategy.

Effective learners plan before beginning a task. In speaking, they think of useful words and phrases in advance and choose topics that are familiar. Before beginning intensive reading, good students think of what they know about the topic and preview the title and text in order to make predictions. Then, they follow up on their predictions and guesses by verifying their accuracy and revising expectations as necessary. These students consciously monitor their production and comprehension. When speaking, they can talk about complex ideas by creatively rephrasing unknown words. They listen to themselves speak and correct for form and meaning. When reading, they monitor comprehension by asking themselves whether what they are understanding makes sense. They visualize to create mental pictures of the story. When they come across unknown words they evaluate the importance of knowing the word. If it is crucial for understanding they inference the meaning of the word based on the text, their knowledge of the topic, or their knowledge of the language. Finally, effective learners evaluate how well they did on the task when they finish. They evaluate their use of strategies and think of what they might do differently next time to improve. Effective students are active learners who take responsibility for the results of their own learning.

As a classroom teacher, you might find the profile of the effective language learner to be a good resource as you model language learning strategies for your students. You might also conduct classroom research to discover the learning strategies of your own students.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Jennifer Delett

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,2* March, 1997

Outlined below are general guiding principles and an instructional framework for incorporating language learning strategies instruction into your lessons.

Guiding principles:

Address the following six principles when teaching any learning strategy.

> Build on strategies students already use by finding out their current strategies and making students aware of the range of strategies used by their classmates

> Integrate strategy instruction with regular lessons, rather than teaching the strategies separately from language learning activities

> Be explicit--name the strategy, tell students why and how it will help them, and when to use it

> Provide choice by letting students decide which strategies work best for them

> Plan continuous instruction in language learning strategies throughout the course

> Use the target language as much as possible for strategies instruction.

Instructional framework:

The instructional framework consists of five stages: Preparation (eliciting students' prior knowledge about and use of learning strategies); Presentation (introducing new strategies); Practice (active applications of new strategies to language learning tasks); Evaluation (student self-evaluation of the strategies practiced); and Expansion (connecting strategies taught to new tasks and contexts). This is a general sequence that can be modified according to students needs. For example, a teacher might teach two or three strategies for reading comprehension as follows:

1. Preparation: Ask what strategies students are already using when they read--both in English and in the target language. Make a class list.
2. Presentation 1: Model and discuss a reading strategy that most students are not yet using in the target language.
3. Practice 1. Have students practice the strategy with a reading text.
4. Presentation 2: Model and discuss another useful reading strategy that can help students.
5. Practice 2: Have students practice the second strategy with a similar reading text.
6. Evaluation: Ask students to evaluate the effectiveness of each strategy and explain reasons for any difficulties they may have had in applying the strategies.
7. Expansion: For homework, have students apply one or both strategies to a different type of reading text and report on their experiences in the next class.

This sequence integrates easily with any language lesson. The strategy instruction is explicit, meaning that the teacher discusses the value of learning strategies, gives names to strategies, and explains to students how the strategies can help them and when to use them. There are opportunities for students to practice the strategies, share strategies with classmates, and reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies. Finally, students are provided with opportunities to transfer the strategies to new tasks.

(From Teaching Learning Strategies to Language Students, Anna Uhl Chamot, 1996.)

USING STORYTELLING TO TEACH STRATEGIES

Jennifer Delett

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,4* May, 1997

Teachers often find that explicitly teaching learning strategies as an integrated part of a lesson is one of the most difficult challenges in strategies instruction. Storytelling, an activity that is already part of many teachers' instructional repertoire, offers teachers a natural environment for teaching strategies to their students.

Storytelling is the oral interpretation of a story, during which the storyteller invites the listeners to create meaning through conversation and imagination. Many foreign language teachers already use storytelling to introduce students to literature and the target culture. Storytelling, however, plays another role in learning a language. The interaction between storyteller, text, and listener models what effective learners think about as they engage in a reading or listening task. Teachers, as storytellers, rely on the students' background knowledge to participate and comprehend. They will ask students to visualize or imagine the setting or events, predict what might happen, and relate characters or events to their own lives. In each case, learners use what they already know to comprehend new information. These interactions foster reflective thinking and facilitate learning. They also provide the basis for using storytelling for strategies instruction.

While sharing a story with students, the teacher can use the natural social setting to make students aware of the thinking process by introducing, modeling, and discussing strategies. She or he can then help students to internalize this process by encouraging them to identify and use of strategies during storytelling and discussing how and when to use them with other tasks. By doing this, the teacher gradually hands over responsibility to the students so that the strategies use can become part of the students' own learning process.

Storytelling lends itself to the strategy of using background knowledge. For example, at the beginning of a story, the teacher might ask students to listen to the title or look at a picture and imagine the setting or characters based on what they already know. The teacher can use this opportunity to introduce the strategy by modeling it, and and explaining it to the students. For example, you can say "I always begin a story by thinking about the title and asking myself what I think the title means and what the story might be about." "When I do this I think about what I know already. I also picture the clues in my mind." "The title of this story is 'Pájaros en la Cabeza'. I know that the title is 'Birds on my Head'. I immediately get a picture in my mind of birds stuck in my hair." After you model the strategy, name the strategy and explain when and how to use it. This discussion can be woven into the story with the same conversational tone that you use to ask questions or pause for interpretation.

Using background knowledge of the text structure can be presented or practiced during storytelling. Listeners know that stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and they anticipate events based on this knowledge. You can model the strategy for students by saying, "I wonder what will happen next? They've tried several times...I know from other stories that it usually takes a few tries, but they always find a solution." Strategy discussions should be short as not to interrupt the flow of the story. At the end of the story, students review the strategy and discuss if it was useful. Discuss how students are using the strategy and how they can incorporate the strategy into their other learning tasks.

Storytelling offers teachers a natural and comfortable environment for strategies instruction. Many language teachers already use stories in their classrooms. Strategies instruction can be easily integrated into the conversations during storytelling, enhancing the effectiveness of the instruction. Likewise, strategy instruction can easily become a continuous part of the course for teachers who regularly use stories in their classrooms.

SELF-EFFICACY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1.5* June, 1997

Self-efficacy refers to learners' beliefs about their abilities to accomplish a task. For example, if people have high, positive self-efficacy about learning a second language, then they believe that they have the power and abilities to reach this goal. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy feel that they do not have the power and abilities to learn a language, thus admitting failure from the start. People with high self-efficacy are more likely to succeed at language learning and also to be more motivated to seriously study the language. Highly motivated students work hard, persevere in the face of difficulties, and find satisfaction in the successful accomplishment of a learning task.

Self-efficacy forms the basis for self-esteem and learning motivation. Self-efficacious learners feel confident about solving a problem because they have developed an approach to problem solving that has worked in the past. They attribute their success mainly to their own efforts and strategies, believe that their own abilities will improve as they learn more, and recognize that errors are part of learning. Students with low self-efficacy, believing themselves to have inherent low ability, choose less demanding tasks and do not try hard because they believe that any effort will reveal their own lack of ability.

Self-efficacy can be used in language instruction to measure students' confidence level in completing specific language tasks such as figuring out the main idea in a reading exercise. Students can complete a self-efficacy questionnaire that reflects the task objectives in your curriculum at various intervals in the program of study to see if there is any change in students' self perceptions. Students' self perceptions are important to teacher, parents and students themselves. If a student starts off with a low perception of his ability, then teacher, parents and student can work together on learning techniques and skills to help boost the student's confidence level. Used regularly, this reflection can also help identify problems student is having during the school year (e.g., self-efficacy unexpectedly lowers) because self-efficacy is not static; it can change over time (increase or decrease) depending on a person's reaction to the task and perception of him/herself.

Having access to appropriate learning strategies should lead students to higher expectations of learning success as an important aspect in viewing oneself as a successful learner is self-control over strategy use. The NCLRC (formerly the NFLRC) conducted research on the self-efficacy levels and frequency of learning strategies use for Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, German and Russian high school language learners as well as French, Japanese and Spanish elementary language immersion students. Students completed self-efficacy and learning strategies questionnaires that were developed and tested by the Center's staff. Analysis of the questionnaires revealed that across the languages studied a positive correlation exists between strategies use and self-efficacy. Students who reported a greater frequency of strategies use also perceived themselves as more confident in their language learning abilities. Conversely, students reporting less frequent strategies use, had a lower level of confidence in their language learning abilities.

The information from these studies provides incentive for teachers to teach and promote strategies use in the classroom as a way of increasing students' self-confidence as learners who may then be more ready to take on challenging learning tasks. Self-control can be enhanced if strategy instruction is combined with metacognitive awareness between strategy use and learning outcomes. When students know why, how, and when to use individual strategies, they can feel more confident that their efforts will lead to success.

LEARNING STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION: GETTING STARTED BY CREATING A LEARNER RESPONSIBLE CLASSROOM

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,7* August, 1997

Getting started with learning strategies requires some preparation with students. The premise of learning strategies instruction is that students take responsibility for their learning by becoming aware of their existing language learning strategies and acquiring new learning techniques. Most students rely heavily on the teacher for their learning outcomes and place the burden of learning on the teacher. In order to have students accept learning strategies instruction as a legitimate component of the language curriculum, the teacher must clarify class expectations from the beginning of instruction. This article describes some activities used to introduce the learner responsible classroom; they are contributed by teachers participating in NCLRC strategies research. These activities may be done in the target language if the language level of students allows.

Students need to be aware of the classroom roles for teacher and student, that is what each person is responsible for in the classroom and the learning process. Many teachers have found the creation of a teacher/student contract to be beneficial in establishing class roles and responsibilities. Ask students to think about and describe the best teacher they have ever had. On poster board write the characteristics students mention under the heading "Characteristics of a good teacher." Then ask students to tell you the characteristics they think make a good learner. Write these on a second poster board under the heading "Characteristics of a good learner." Tell students that you would like to make an agreement with them. You promise to try and live up to the characteristics of a good teacher if students agree to strive to be good learners. Hang the posters in the room for future reference.

Another way of introducing learning responsibilities is through the use of analogies. Tell students that learning a language is like being in an orchestra. You are the conductor and can direct, monitor, and give feedback, but students are the players who are responsible for making the music. In another analogy, you can say that learning a language is like playing soccer. You are the coach who can instruct them on plays, watch progress, and give advice, but students are the players who must go out on the field and play the game. In both analogies, point out that the musicians/players must work together to be successful, just as in a language classroom, in which students need to cooperate, respect, and trust each other for optimal benefit from the class. In these analogies you are emphasizing that as the teacher you will give support, model how to use the language, provide feedback, etc. but you cannot actually learn the language for students -- they need to become active participants.

After establishing student/teacher responsibilities, students need to know how to fulfill these responsibilities. Begin by asking students to reflect on the learning process and how they learn. Students can compare learning a language to learning other subjects, such as math, history, or art. Students can discuss what it means to learn a language, focusing on how we learn to read, write, listen, and speak in a second language and what sorts of strategies students think help them in each modality. If students are not complete beginners, they can write letters to novice learners, recommending the best ways of studying the language. If your students are beginners, share letters of more advanced learners and discuss techniques the beginners think they would be comfortable using.

These types of discussions and activities help students realize their involvement in the language learning process. Once you have created a classroom that focuses on student involvement and thought processes, you are ready to begin introducing learning strategies. As a result of this preparation, students are more likely to be comfortable with and accepting of the idea of learning strategies instruction.

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USING THINK-ALOUD TECHNIQUES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,8* September, 1997

A think-aloud is a technique in which a person verbalizes his or her thought processes while working on a task. Think-aloud interviews are frequently used in research in order to discover and understand the cognitive processes involved in the task completion. Think-alouds can reveal a person's learning strategies, motivations, affective state, level of self-efficacy, and level of success in task completion. The specific information elicited through a think-aloud depends on the purpose and goals of the interviewer. In other words, the interviewer asks questions and gives prompts which guide the interviewee in the right direction in terms of areas of data.

As an on-line measure, think alouds produce data with a high level of validity and reliability. Students are telling their thoughts as they are working on a specific task, so it can be assumed that the thought processes directly correspond to the task. The interviewer can also observe the student's behavior at the time of the task, which adds another source of data. Most students are pleased to have someone interested in their ideas and thoughts and therefore are open and honest in their reports.

The NCLRC has used think-aloud interviews extensively to conduct research on students' learning strategies use. Interviews have been transcribed and analyzed to reveal a wealth of information on students' thought processes. Through our work with teachers, sharing the results of think-alouds and providing professional support for implementing strategies instruction, we have discovered that think-alouds can serve as a valuable instructional technique for creating a classroom of active, independent learners. Classroom think-alouds can make students more aware of their thought processes and increase their control over their learning techniques and affective states.

Teachers can use think-aloud techniques in the classroom by focusing on how students get their answers. For instance, when a student answers a question, ask the student how he or she arrived at this answer (How do you know that? What makes you think so? What were you thinking as you did that? Why did you decide to say that?). This requires a shift from immediately evaluating a student's response as right or wrong to looking at the student's processing. Focusing on the thought process can provide valuable information about how students arrive at their answer. If the student's response is correct, then sharing his or her strategies may encourage other students to try new techniques. If a response is incorrect, focusing on how the student got the answer can help you and the student see where his or her thinking may have gone astray. Analyzing the process, as opposed to only evaluating the product (a right or wrong answer), can give students information on learning techniques that can be transferred to the next learning opportunity.

Although, conscious or unconscious, verbalized or internal thinking aloud is part of our everyday lives, students will need coaching in how to think aloud in foreign language situations. As the teacher, you can explain and model this process for students. You can say that thinking aloud is like when you talk out loud as you are looking for something you lost, such as your homework. You might say, "I know I did that homework, but where did I put it? I remember seeing it on the kitchen table. Maybe my mother put it away-I think I'll ask. Maybe I put it in another notebook-I'll look there. Oh, what am I going to tell my teacher tomorrow?..." Next, you can do a think- aloud yourself in front of the class working on a language task. You may decide to role play a student and work on a task at their level or you can work at a task that is realistically challenging for you (perhaps in another language). As you think aloud, students can take notes on the kinds of thought processes you use. Afterwards, you can have group discussion of what you did to work through the task.

Think-alouds can be used in pair activities with students. One student can work on a language task and think aloud. The other student can be the interviewer who writes down on a think-aloud record sheet the strategies or thought processes verbalized by the first student. When finished with the task, students are given another task and reverse roles. Pairs of students can work on similar types of task so they can compare and discuss strategies. You may wish to start students with a task for which it is easier to think aloud such as reading, vocabulary, or grammar, and then move students on to other modalities. Depending on students' language level, they can do this activity in the target language. You can teach students think-aloud questions in the target language (What are you thinking? If you don't know that word, what are you going to do?, etc.)

Think-aloud records can be part of students' learning logs or portfolio entries. They can be used to increase students' awareness of how they learn and encourage them to broaden their learning techniques. Think-alouds are useful in individualizing language instruction. By focusing on students' thought processes, teachers also become more aware of how their students are learning and are thus better able to identify problem areas and appropriate solutions.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT: A CRITICAL SKILL FOR REFLECTION AND GROWTH

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,10* November, 1997

The strategy of assessing one's abilities and progress at different points in the language learning process is vital to language learning. It is closely related to goal-setting, a tool to help students increase their motivation and personal involvement in the learning process. Used together, goal-setting and self-assessment complete a learning cycle that can improve students' metacognitive awareness through active involvement and reflection.

Students need to self-assess in order to monitor their learning progress. Through self-assessment, students learn that their progress and grade do not depend solely on the teacher, but in large part on themselves. Student self-evaluation on specific tasks is usually accurate; research conducted at the NCLRC indicates that students' evaluation of their progress toward course goals is similar to teacher evaluation. Regularly used, self-evaluations can help students track areas of strength and weakness and address problems before final grades are issued. Self-evaluation also allows teachers to see how students view their progress, leading to individualized instruction.

Self-evaluation can be used as a measure of one's overall ability in target language performance, or as an evaluation of how well one has achieved on a specific language task. Self-assessing one's language abilities can be divided into different domains, depending on the instructional setting, for example, by the four modalities of speaking, writing, reading, and listening, or by functional categories such as understanding and describing physical characteristics or expressing and understanding opinions. Students rate their current abilities using a rubric appropriate to the curriculum (e.g., numerical scales such as 1-5 or 0-100 or descriptors, such as poor, fair, good, and excellent.) In addition to rubrics, teachers can ask students to keep learning diaries or logs to track their progress and abilities. These journals can be used to dialogue with the teacher or can be private to the student.

Self-evaluation on specific language tasks needs to be tied directly to goals set by either the student or the curriculum so that students know the criteria with which they will assess themselves. For example, if the student is to evaluation how well she did in a unit on communication of biographical information, she needs to know that the goals to be met were being able to 1) give oral information on her own family members, 2) asking questions about someone else's family, 3) understanding a written description of a family. The student can then use a rubric (e.g. I can do this, I can't do this) to assess her ability to perform each of these tasks. Self-evaluation of a task can also be more detailed. For example, a student evaluating how well she is able to talk about her family can use criteria such as 1) speaking fluently with few pauses, 2) using a wide variety of words personalized to her family, and 3) using correct adjective/noun agreement. The type of self-evaluation always depends on the students' and/or curricular goals. To emphasize student progress, students can evaluate their abilities before starting and then again after completing a unit. In addition to completing the self-evaluation as described above, students can also include actual evidence of progress. For example, if the learning task is finding the main idea in a reading passage, students can write down what they think the main idea is, as well as how well they believe they can find and understand the main idea.

As with goal-setting, many students may not at first feel comfortable with self-evaluation, thinking that it is the job of the teacher to evaluate. However, students cannot grow as learners if they are not able to assess their own abilities and progress and set a path for future learning. Students need to be taught the strategy of self-assessment explicitly and supported in their use of the strategy.

THE COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACH IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Anna Uhl Chamot

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 2,2* March, 1998

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The CALLA model has been successfully implemented in over 30 school districts in the United States in English as a Second Language and bilingual programs, and has recently been suggested as an instructional model for the foreign language classroom. This article provides an overview of CALLA and describes how it can be used by foreign language teachers in meeting two important components of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning: using the target language to learn new content information and applying learning strategies to the language learning process.

The theoretical framework of CALLA is based on a cognitive model of learning which views effective learners as actively involved in their own learning, capable of understanding their own learning processes, and strategic in their use of prior knowledge to facilitate new learning tasks. In this model, good foreign language learners strive to understand the requirements of a language task and call upon previous experiences (both linguistic and experiential) to help them complete the task successfully. For example, if the language task is to make a short oral report to the class, a learner might draw on his or her previous experiences with giving reports in English (making note cards, rehearsing in front of a mirror, and the like) as well as his or her store of target language expressions, vocabulary, and grammatical structures.

The CALLA Model

CALLA has three major components: lessons focusing on high-priority topics from content subjects such as science, math, social studies, and literature; development of the language needed for talking, understanding, reading and writing about content topics; and explicit instruction in using learning strategies for learning both content and language in the second language. The goals of CALLA are for students to develop the ability to use the target language for learning essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning.

In order to integrate these three components, CALLA teachers follow an instructional sequence that provides organized opportunities for students to learn and practice content, language, and learning strategies. This sequence consists of five phases which are recursive - teachers can move back and forth between the phases as necessary. The first phase is *Preparation,* in which the teacher provides an overview of the lesson's tasks and elicits students' relevant prior knowledge about the topic, language needed, and useful learning strategies. New content, language, and learning strategies are then presented in the *Presentation* phase. This is followed by the *Practice* phase, which gives students many opportunities to practice new information and skills in a variety of ways. In the *Evaluation* phase, students are asked to assess what they have learned through activities such as learning logs and journals. Finally, in the *Expansion* phase, students make applications of what they have been learning in the language classroom to other areas of their lives. This phase provides opportunities for students to draw parallels between their own cultural background and that of the culture(s) represented by the target language and often involves projects which take students out of the classroom to explore local and global communities.

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Applications of CALLA to the Foreign Language Classroom

Three criteria can be used to select content to include in a foreign language CALLA program. The first is that the topic should both provide new information to students and relate to background knowledge that they already have. The second criterion is that the topic should be intrinsically interesting to students, and the third is that authentic text from the target culture should be used to present the topic, either as a listening or a reading activity. Examples of content meeting these criteria could be a newspaper article, video, or brief biography related to a content subject that students are currently studying. For instance, information about scientific discoveries, environmental issues, or health concerns in countries speaking the target language could be related to what students are learning about these topics in their science and social studies courses in English.

After selecting an informative and interesting authentic text, the teacher can then design language activities around it and decide on learning strategies that will help students understand, remember, and apply the new information. Beginning level students can work collaboratively to identify main ideas and essential vocabulary (selective attention), while more advanced students can make inferences about unfamiliar words and cultural assumptions. Students can use graphic organizers to identify their prior knowledge about the topic and new information learned. They can also interview their English-speaking content teachers for additional information on the topic, and present this information in the target language to their foreign language classmates. In this way, students will be using the target language functionally as a means of acquiring new information - and almost incidentally, they will be developing their language skills.

The learning strategies component of CALLA is as important in the foreign language classroom as in second language contexts. To deal with the demands of new content and the type of language used to present it, students need to use many of the same learning strategies that they employ for similar tasks in English. They need to plan before beginning a task (for example, predicting before reading and brainstorming before writing), monitor their comprehension or production as they work through a task, use strategies to solve both linguistic and information-related problems when they arise, and evaluate their own level of achievement after completing a task.

CALLA can be a useful framework for organizing instruction in the foreign language class that helps students understand how to use the target language to learn new and interesting information.

Reference: Chamot, A.U. & O'Malley, J. M. (1994). The CALLA Handbook: How to Implement the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN COMBINATION

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 2,2* March, 1998

Research on learning strategies generally focuses on identifying and describing individual strategies. Data on students' learning processes, collected through techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, diaries, are examined and separated into discrete cognitive behaviors. This information is useful for understanding how people learn a second language and for developing a basis for classroom instruction. However, as illustrated in the following student quote, strategies are often more powerful when used in combinations. Therefore, teachers may want to emphasize these naturally occurring combinations in classroom strategies instruction.

During a think-aloud interview, a third-year high school student of Spanish reads a text about the history of chocolate. When verbalizing her thought processes she says:
"I'm focusing on the title first. It says "de los dioses" and "dios" is "god" so I figure they're going to be talking about the gods. The subscript says something about chocolate and chemicals-those words sound the same in English. So it sounds like they're talking about food. I guess the title means food of the gods. I don't know what "alimento" means but because they are talking about food and gods and I know from Spanish class they eat chocolate for saluting their gods."

In this quote the student uses selective attention to pay attention to the title. The student continues to use selective attention by focusing on the word in the title she knows. Next she predicts that the text is going to be about gods. She then focuses her attention on the subscript using the strategy cognates to identify that the text is talking about food. She goes back to the title and is now prepared to make an inference about the meaning of the word "alimento" based on the words she does know. She verifies her inference by using her background knowledge of what she has learned and remembers from Spanish class. In trying to figure out the topic of the text this student has used several strategies. For instance, she used selective attention to focus on known words. Then based on these known words she was prepared to make predictions and inferences about meanings in the text. She verified her guesses by bringing in her background knowledge. Had she chosen to use only one strategy she would not have been as successful in her understanding. Selective attention, prediction, background knowledge and verification are examples of strategies that work well in combinations.Teachers can include explicit explanation and discussions on possible effective strategy combinations when implementing strategies instruction.

There are many other possible strategy combinations. For example, goal setting, goal checking, and self evaluation are strategies that are most effective when used together. Students begin by focusing on developing objectives and identifying the purpose of the task. However, they need to check whether they met their goals, otherwise there is little point in setting goals. Evaluating progress towards goals can give learners confidence if progress is being made. If students are not meeting their goals, evaluation provides and opportunity for reflection on and revision of plans and actions for reaching goals. The strategy self evaluation can help by having students reflect on how well they have learned the material or completed the task. Self evaluation gives students the insight necessary to assess their goals.

Another example of a natural strategies partnership is monitoring and visualization, which usually occur together. While reading or listening a learner creates a mental image or draws a picture to check understanding. If the learner cannot conjure up a picture or the picture does not seem to make sense, then she may not be comprehending the text correctly. Misunderstanding indicates that other strategies are necessary to solve the

problem.

Assessing strategies use can be teamed up with self talk for an effective strategy combination. By evaluating the effectiveness of his strategy use, a student can reduce learning anxiety by reminding himself of his inner learning strategies resources. He can give himself further encouragement by thinking about other strategies he can use to help himself at a given moment. Self talk is also frequently used with using one's background knowledge. By thinking about what he already knows about the target language, the world, the context of the text, and other areas of knowledge, a student gains confidence for the learning task.

There are many other strategy combinations. Teachers may want to elicit from students some of their favorite combinations. Student pair think-aloud interviews can help students identify useful combinations for a specific task. Class discussions immediately after an activity can also be used to help students reflect on different combinations. Although teachers should be careful not to introduce too many strategies at one time, which could overwhelm learners, they should make students aware that strategies work best in combinations.

If you are interested in learning more about strategies, please see Announcements below for more information on our summer institute on language learning strategies which will be held in Washington, DC June 22-23. Also, please visit our Web site for a list of our related products.

GATHERING INFORMATION ON STUDENTS' LEARNING STRATEGIES USE: QUESTIONNAIRES

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 2.4* July, 1998

Since its origin in 1997, *The Language Resource* has provided readers with information on the use of learning strategies in the foreign language classroom. Individual strategies and strategy combinations have been introduced, teaching techniques for incorporating learning strategies in the curriculum have been described, and findings from the past eight years of learning strategies research conducted by the NCLRC have been presented. The basis of information on learning strategies begins with the various instruments available for collecting this data. These instruments are useful to researchers, classroom teachers, and students- to basically anyone who is interested in expanding their own knowledge of the learning process and enabling this knowledge to impact on instructional techniques. This article, focusing on questionnaires, is the first in a series of articles presenting a variety of learning strategies instruments tested and used by NCLRC researchers, foreign language teachers and students. In the upcoming issues articles will look at interviews, learning logs/diaries, and observation techniques.

Learning strategies are thoughts or actions that learners use to help them produce, comprehend and remember information. Frequently it is difficult to observe strategies because they can be mental techniques. Learners themselves are often unaware of their strategies until someone, usually the teacher, raises their consciousness of their learning techniques. This is referred to as increasing learners' metacognition. Learning strategies instruments can help students become aware of their strategies and can also help teachers become aware of the strategies students are already using, those which may need to be explicitly taught, and the impact strategies instruction is having on students' strategies use.

Although there are many instruments available for gathering information on strategies use, there is no perfect instrument due to the often intangible nature of strategies. Each instrument has its own strengths and weaknesses. Many practitioners favor questionnaires because they are easy to administer and can be constructed to target specific information. Questionnaires can be either closed in which case students are given structured choices for responses or open in which case students need to come up with the response items themselves. Regardless of the format chosen, the questionnaire needs to be contextualized within language contexts (e.g., reading, vocabulary learning, dialogue practice) in order to elicit meaningful responses. Students can more accurately think about how they approach a reading task but have more difficulty conceptualizing what they do to learn a language in general. In other words, specificity of the task in the questionnaire increases the likelihood that responses will be meaningful, truthful, and accurate.

Closed questionnaires are useful if you are interested in finding out information on specific strategies. Some examples are ranking, checklists, and multiple choice. In a ranking questionnaire, strategies are listed and described and students rank order them from more to less frequently used or favored. A ranking list can give information about an individual's strategy use; information can also be collapsed across individuals to provide a class profile of favorite strategies. Some teachers use this information to create posters to hang around the room and remind students of possible strategies. In a checklist, students simply check off those strategies used for a given task. A checklist is useful for correlating strategies with situations in which to use them. Students complete a task or unit and note those strategies that they used and found effective. A multiple choice questionnaire can elicit information on the frequency with which students use certain strategies. Some sample items are: (1) Before you read, do you think what the story will be about? (2) While you read, do you imagine pictures in your head or

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imagine you are part of the story? (3) When you read a word you don't know, do you try to figure out its meaning by looking at the rest of the story? Response items could include: almost never, rarely, sometimes, usually, almost always. This type of a questionnaire can be useful if you want to find out which strategies are frequently or infrequently used in order to plan an instructional sequence. It is also a favored data collection technique for pre- and post-testing in a situation in which you want to determine the impact of strategies instruction on students' strategies use. Responses to this type of closed questionnaire are easy to tally and score. There is, however, an initial time investment in creating or locating an existing questionnaire. There is also the danger that students will respond either positively because they believe that that is the correct answer or negatively because they do not want to give what they perceive as the correct answer.

Open-ended questionnaires give students the opportunity to report on their own strategies. Items should be contextualized with language tasks and might include questions such as (1) What do you do before you start to read in [language]?; (2) What do you do while you are reading in [language]?; (3) What do you do if you don't understand something when reading? Open-ended questionnaires have high validity because students have to come up with the information themselves versus simply circling a response item or placing a check mark. We could assume that this type of reflective answer is more likely to be truthful. Open-ended questionnaires are generally easy to develop and administer and may even be given in the target language for more advanced students. However, open-ended questionnaires do require careful planning and time for analysis. Responses need to be identified as particular strategies and categorized as students rarely respond as clearly as "I use goal setting and background knowledge."

Questionnaires generally collect retrospective information. That is students think about what they think they do in a specific situation. They are not actually doing the task at the time they are completing the questionnaire which would be cumbersome. Due to the retrospective nature of questionnaires, there may be some concerns about their reliability. Would students respond exactly the same on a different day? One way to address this concern is to triangulate the data collection. A questionnaire does not have to be either opened or closed, but can be a combination of the two. Collecting information on strategies in a variety of ways and then examining the data for similarities will strengthen the reliability. Of course, reliability can also be increased by using another data collection technique in addition to questionnaires. The September issue of the newsletter will focus on individual, group, and peer interviews.

If you are interested in receiving copies of the NCLRC learning strategies questionnaires, please write to us at nclrc@nicom.com. The questionnaires are available for young children and middle school through higher education.

REFLECTING ON STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION

Jennifer Delett

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 2,4* July, 1998

After spending a year participating in projects at the NCLRC devoted to learning strategies research, materials development, and teacher training, I had the opportunity to find out how strategies instruction would play out in my own language classroom. In this article, I share with you my approach, my successes, and my challenges with implementing strategies instruction as a new teacher.

In January, 1998, I began teaching ESL at a local high school. Although I was a new teacher, I was determined to incorporate learning strategies instruction into my classroom. As I began, I felt the typical pressures of being a new teacher and managing my class load, and I had to limit my expectations. I wanted to incorporate strategies successfully but I knew I would not have time to develop a comprehensive learning strategies program.

Looking back on the semester, I realize that I integrated explicit strategies instruction both formally and informally in my classes. By formal strategy instruction, I mean instruction that was planned and integrated into my lesson plans. I formally introduced a few strategies to my students that I thought would be most useful to them. Although I could have used a strategies inventory or questionnaire, I based my decisions about what strategies to teach on my observation of students' learning and my knowledge of strategies. I focused on students' learning difficulties and choose strategies that would help them in these areas.

For example, in the high level ESL/Civics class I noted that students were having difficulty reading the mainstream civics textbook and comprehending and organizing the information. They also had difficulty figuring out the meaning of new words while they were reading. For this class I chose to focus on predicting, summarizing, and note taking strategies to help them with the textbook reading. I focused on inference and word analysis to help them find the meaning of new words. In my mid-level language arts class, I also focused on reading. At this level students were expected to read more and to read more independently. Unknown words frequently stopped student comprehension of material. The most common student strategy was using the dictionary. Again, I focused on inference based on context and picture clues, word analysis, and using the strategies in combination. Finally for the beginning level students, I focused on listening. This is an important skill as a beginning language student. Additionally, all of the strategies we focused on can be transferred to reading. I taught prediction, selective attention, and using background knowledge.

Focusing on few strategies allowed me to recycle strategies through different modalities and give students plenty of practice using the strategies, making decisions about what strategies to use, and evaluating the strategies. Tailoring the strategies to their needs was a good way to select strategies to teach.

As the semester progressed, I also found myself teaching strategies more informally. By this I mean that the instruction was still explicit, but it was less planned and less formal. My integration of strategies instruction became more spontaneous. For example I would ask my students how they worked on a specific task. I would encourage students to focus on the process of a task and evaluate their approach. I noticed and commented on students' use of strategies and I spontaneously asked students what strategies they used for different tasks. I found the informal component helped my strategies instruction become more natural. The more natural it became, the more integrated it became into my instruction, and the more natural it became for the students.

Of course nothing is without its challenges. One challenge was the time needed for some students to successfully

use strategies independently. Even after one semester, I realized that many of the weaker students were still not using strategies independently. The students needed more practice. I realized that strategies instruction is a long process that needs to be continued over many years to be most effective. Another challenge was teaching strategies in classes of mixed ability. When less strategic and more strategic learners shared the same classroom, the instruction became tiresome and useless for students who were already strategic and successful. Because they were bored, they distracted the students who could have benefitted from the instruction. I tried two approaches to resolve the problem. First, when possible I broke the class into groups and conducted strategies lessons for those who wanted to attend. The other students had an independent assignment. Second, I tried to involve more strategic learners by encouraging them to share their experiences with strategies and asking them to work with less strategic learners.

Because I was a new teacher who entered the school mid-year, I was not able to plan and implement a comprehensive learning strategies program. However, I was able to integrate learning strategies with some degree of success by using a limited number of strategies tailored to my students needs. My students enjoyed the new dimension to learning that strategies instruction offered. Students liked to be consulted and they liked to talk about how they learn. Formal instruction and informal conversations about strategies helped my students on the road to becoming responsible successful learners who are conscious of how they learn and therefore in control of how they learn.

B. A LOOK AT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: USING YOUR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,1* February, 1997

Some students instinctively use the knowledge they have already obtained through life experiences when learning a second language, whereas others approach language learning as though nothing they have ever experienced could be related or helpful. All language students can benefit from explicit instruction about how to use background knowledge to help them build upon their existing knowledge base when learning a new language.

Using your background knowledge means using information you already know about the topic, the world, and language to help do a task. This strategy should be used/taught because thinking about what you already know helps you get ready for the task by familiarizing yourself with it. By having in mind what you already know, it is easier to understand and learn new information. When you create connections between new information and known experiences, what you have learned becomes more meaningful and thus more memorable.

You should use this strategy when you have knowledge about the topic of the task; use it whenever new information comes up in the task. This versatile strategy can be used in all phases of learning. During planning use it to get ready and anticipate information. When monitoring use it to check whether information makes sense. During problem solving think about what you know to make good inferences. When evaluating after you finish all or part of the task use what you know to check your comprehension and production against what you know might make sense.

You can teach background knowledge explicitly to all levels of students. Give the strategy a name in the target language to keep instruction in the L2. Explain what it means to students by providing a definition and rationale of why and when to use it. Model for students how you use it on a language task. Give students examples: If you are reading an article on a trade agreement in the target country, think of what you know about the target country's economy and relationship with other countries before starting to read. Prompt students to use the strategy by providing them with lots of practice opportunities. As students master the strategy themselves, fade explicit prompts. Finally, ask students to evaluate the usefulness of the strategy and to think of other situations in which it might be valuable. By teaching background knowledge you are giving students a critical skill that will help them in language learning and throughout their lives.

From an effective language learner using their background knowledge:

Student is reading an article on the history of chocolate:
"...Montezuma is another Aztec leader, well actually emperor...I like history so I recognize that. It says Montezuma but it doesn't say he was an Aztec emperor but I know that...'en aquel tiempo el chocolate se servia frio' this is about serving it cold and I know that because we did a cooking unit in class."

SELECTIVE ATTENTION--A STRATEGY FOR FOCUSING ATTENTION

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,2* March, 1997

Second language learners often find it difficult and unfruitful to pay attention to all input and output at the same time. For example, when listening in the target language, students often complain that they cannot understand anything because they are trying to understand everything. Effective learners decide in advance to narrow their focus of attention and are then able to attain their goals set for the task. The strategy, selective attention, means focusing on specific aspects of language or situational details to help a learner perform a task. This strategy is also know as scanning, finding specific information, and attending to key words, phrases, ideas, linguistic markers and types of information.

Deciding to focus on specific information makes it easier to identify critical information for the goal because the student can give that input full concentration and ignore distractions. We often think of selective attention for the comprehension modalities-- listening and reading. For example, a student may pay selective attention to the title, picture and key and/or known words in a reading text to get the main idea. In another example of selective attention, a student listens to announcements in a train station. The student decides to listen for the city and departure times pertinent to his/her destination. In addition to comprehension, selective attention can also be used with the production modalities. When speaking or writing, a student may choose to focus attention on certain grammar structures which s/he knows are important for conveying his/her meaning.

Selective attention is useful for a variety of tasks, especially if the goal requires the student to understand or give specific information. During the planning process of a task students can use selective attention to decide in advance on what to focus their attention to reach their goals. Students can use the strategy to keep attention focused during the task. For problem-solving, selective attention helps students to identify information they do not know in order to pinpoint problems and expand learning. After completing a task, students can use selective attention to decide if they identified information necessary for the task and to help them decide on plans for the future. Selective attention is a powerful learning technique that enables students to take control of their own learning by learning how to control their attention throughout all phases of a language task.

STRATEGY: MAKING INFERENCES

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,3* April, 1997

Successful second language learners must inevitably learn to cope with the challenges of unfamiliar language and missing information. Thus, the ability to think critically and logically are essential characteristics of effective learners. Teachers can help students deal with language challenges by teaching problem-solving strategies such as inferencing, often referred to as making educated guesses.

Making inferences is used to guess the meaning of unfamiliar language structures and fill in missing information based on:what is known about the topic; the content of the text; knowledge of language structures; knowledge of text structure; other context clues (e.g., non-verbal cues, pictures, etc.). Often, the information students need to solve problems is available if theylook at other parts of the task and at their own resources. Drawing inferences can help students solve problems without having to go to another person or reference material. Inferencing, which is most often used when reading and listening, is one of the fastest and most natural ways of acquiring additional vocabulary. It is easier to remember words when the learner is the one actively constructing meaning.

Through its six years of learning strategies research, the NCLRC has found that most students use the strategy of making inferences. However, usage differs between more and less effective learners in that good learners rely on all types of background knowledge to make inferences. Less effective learners tend to rely on context clues such as pictures. More effective learners also tend to be more active in their construction of meaning. Less effective learners seem to lack confidence in their own abilities or knowledge base and frequently give up without trying to make a guess at the meaning.

Following are quotes taken from think aloud interviews with more and less effective high school Russian students using inferencing while reading a text:

More Effective Students:
"I'm trying to figure out because it looks like a list because of the dashes, that's how I do lists, but now it looks like a dialogue because they ask a question and then this seems like a response to a question. 'Anton and Vera' so they introduce the people. They live in or at something number twelve. I don't know what that is but it's obviously a location type place. It's probably a house or building number."

"I recognize Moscow so I figure it's telling something about Moscow. It sounds like it's talking about somebody's family because I saw 'Mama' several time and it keeps introducing people like it's introducing a family that lives in Moscow."

Less Effective Students:
"I don't even know half these words. I get confused with some words. Some of them I have no idea what they are. Like that one, I don't even know what that means. That one's a name. That's 'fruit' and that one's 'meat.' I'm just looking for words that are familiar. Ask me what it [the text] means, I can't tell you because I don't know."

We believe that as language teachers we can help students become more resourceful and confident learners by explicitly teaching them strategies such as inferencing. Problem-solving strategies help students increase their self-reliance as language learners.

AN EFFCTIVE STRATEGY FOR INCREASING SELF-EFFICACY: SELF-TALK

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,5* June, 1997

Learning a language is a cognitively complex task. Learners must be able to handle a certain amount of ambiguity and be able to face difficult challenges. The strategy self-talk means making positive statements like "I can do this" to help oneself get through challenging tasks. Reassuring yourself while doing a difficult task may help you do more than you thought you could because even if you cannot do the task perfectly you can probably do some of it. For example, if students are reading something that is hard for them, they can silently say, "Don't give up on this. It's okay that I don't understand every word." Students can use self-talk to reduce anxiety by reminding themselves of their progress, resources available to them, and their goals. They can think about learning strategies that have been successful for them in the past to help them solve problems at hand. For example, students might think about previous challenging reading tasks in which they were able to guess the meaning of some unknown words or they were able to look in a dictionary. Self-talk may increase students' motivation to continue working at a difficult task rather than giving up because they feel that success is not within their abilities.

Although all students can benefit from explicit instruction of the strategy, self-talk, those with a low level of self-efficacy are probably in greatest need of it. In the following quote a student of Russian with a low level of self-confidence attempts to read but gives up:

"I don't know how to pronounce the "x." I don't know know--I'm going to pronounce this all wrong. I just can't read it. I look at it and it's just too difficult."

On the other hand, a student with a higher level of self-efficacy uses the strategy of self-talk to remind himself of the different strategies he knows to use when faced with the problem of remembering words:

"I'm having trouble putting all the words together and remembering some words. Some words don't register well but I'm trying my hardest to remember how to say them. Let's see--when I try to remember things I try to come up with the words in the back of my mind by associating them. I try to remember what words go with what words in English by whatever means of association or referencing I use in my mind and I piece them together in the sentence."

Teachers can model for students how to use the strategy of self-talk by saying, for example, "I am feeling nervous about speaking in Russian, but I've practiced and even if I'm not perfect I know I can say something. Even if I make a mistake, everyone will probably still understand me. If I can't remember how to say something, I'll say something else I do know. OK I'm going to take a few deep breaths and I'll be ready." Teachers can then explain that students can use this strategy themselves emphasizing that most students probably already use it in areas other than language learning. Teachers can follow-up on the explanation by working individually with students to encourage them. Students may also want to identify if there are certain tasks that make them more apprehensive than others so they can focus their attention on these more difficult areas. One teacher who taught learning strategies, including self-talk, made the comment, "...the task doesn't look so overwhelming...students will try it now, whereas before they might have just looked at it and said, "No, I can't do it. It's too hard." They have tools and that makes it easier for them."

EFFECTIVE MEMORY STRATEGIES

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,6* July, 1997

Learning of any kind requires the retention of the desired, new information. In language acquisition, students have to learn grammar, the sound system, social and cultural behaviors, and of course, vocabulary. There are many strategies for retaining information-this article presents three strategies that students have found to be effective for remembering vocabulary items.

Information is retained and connected in the brain through mental links or pathways that are mapped onto an individual's existing schema. If the links are numerous and personally meaningful, the information is easier to memorize and recall later. Making meaningful associations with new words and phrases can make vocabulary acquisition more effective and efficient. Unfortunately, however, many students, especially less effective language learners, do not initiate this active role in vocabulary learning. NCLRC (formerly NFLRC) staff conducted interviews with groups of secondary-level language students studying Spanish, Japanese, German, and Russian. One of the questions posed to students was how they learned vocabulary. Although many strategies were mentioned, repetition was the most frequently mentioned across languages. Following are student quotes describing how they use repetition to learn new words:

"I keep going over the same word over and over again."

"I say it over and over again til it sticks."

"If you see it over and over and you say it over and over and you write it over and over, eventually it just sticks with you and you don't have to use strategies or even think about it."

While undoubtedly repeated exposure to materials will liken students' chances of remembering something, the sheer volume of material needed to be learned in language acquisition indicates that more efficient strategies may be necessary. One teacher began instruction of memory strategies with middle school Spanish students by discussing the many ways they can build bridges in their minds to help remember information. Students quickly caught onto the idea and each began to try to build the most bridges.

The NCLRC research indicated that students used many effective strategies other than repetition. We would like to present three of these which students believed helped build bridges in their memory pathways: visualization, keyword imagery method, manipulation/acting out.

Visualization is a strategy in which the learner creates an image that represents the definition of the word and associates this image whenever the word is encountered. The image should be personalized so that it reflects an image in the person's mind. For instance, if the word is "cat," the learner visualizes a familiar cat or even a funny cartoon image. This strategy is helpful because associating the word with a picture creates a mental link that helps learn the word without having to translate into the native language. It's useful whenever the vocabulary lends itself to a vivid image. Many students studying languages with different orthographies and symbols believe that visualizing is an especially effective strategy. One student of Japanese made the following comment, "I use visual strategies because I think if you use visual strategies you can see different pictures in the different kanji or katakana and it seems easy, you can picture it in your mind." Another student explains, "I always use my personal visual techniques so that it's easier for me to remember. I try to make some effort to make the pictures look like what I remember because that way if you do something your mind is more liable to remember it than just thinking, if you actually do the action and trying to put a relationship of some kind of picture with it."

Keyword imagery method is a proven, effective way of remembering vocabulary across disciplines. There are three steps to the method:

Step 1: Think of a keyword that sounds like the new word, and imagine it as a picture.
Step 2: Think of a picture that represents the meaning of the new word or information.
Step 3: Link the pictures together in your mind. Crazy linking pictures are easy to remember.
For example: Russian word--старый (staryj); Definition--old; Keyword image--a star in the sky; Interactive image--a personified old star with perhaps a long white beard.
Using the keyword method creates a visual and personal association between meaning and sound and these mental links help remember the vocabulary item. The following is a quote from a high school Russian student who likes to use keyword imagery: "The word for turtle, черепаха (cherepakha), sounds like cherry pie, then you think of a turtle eating a cherry pie. You can visualize it in your mind. If you try to memorize it, you have to do it over and over. Association is more efficient."

Manipulation/acting out is the real life form of visualization. The learner moves or holds related or symbolic objects while talking or thinking about the information. It includes role-playing or pantomiming the meaning of the word or phrase. If students are learning words for cooking and food, then they can say these words in the target language while doing the actions in their kitchen. Or it can be as simple as holding a pencil if trying to learn the word for pencil. Acting out or using real objects increases the level of concentration and helps associate words with their concrete meanings, without having to translate into the native language.

All three of the described strategies were elicited during group interviews with students. Students were willing to share with us and each other the strategies they found most effective. You may find it useful to ask your students to talk about their favorite memorization techniques so that they can learn from each other. If you or your students have effective memorization techniques that you think might benefit other teachers and students, we invite you to submit them to: NCLRC, The Language Resource, nclrc@nicom.com.

GOAL SETTING: A STRATEGY FOR SELF-REGULATION

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,9* October, 1997

In most situations, goals are set through the teacher by the curriculum. However, giving students the opportunity to establish their own personal goals, in addition to or in collaboration with those set by the program, allows students to reflect on their reasons for learning a second language and to decide on their learning direction, thus increasing their motivation and personal involvement in the learning process. Goals can be either short term (set by asking oneself, *what do I want to learn to be able to do this week/unit*) or long term (set by asking, *how am I going to use this language in my life, what do I want to be able to do at the end of this year/semester.*). Depending on your students and curriculum, long term goals may be used to help set shorter, more reachable goals. For example, if a student's long term goal is to be able to live and work in Japan for a year, then he may focus on weekly short term goals such as being able to buy a train ticket, social customs for talking on the telephone, and giving culturally appropriate biographical information about himself. Long term goals are usually set at the beginning of the course, but may be re-evaluated and adjusted periodically. Short term goals are set more frequently (weekly, biweekly).

You may need to model for students the difference between long term, short term, reachable and unreachable goals. When first asked to set goals, students unaccustomed to goal setting may set objectives such as "I want to understand everything my Spanish speaking friends say." This is not a realistic goal towards which the student can positively measure progress. If goals are not reachable, then students are likely to become discouraged and loose motivation when assessing progress towards the goals. Rather, examples of reachable goals are "I want to learn 20 new words about music." or "I want to be able to give my opinions on and understand the main idea in a conversation about popular music." By modeling examples of different kinds of goals for the class as a whole and by working with students individually, you can help students set reachable goals that give students' confidence and a skill that can be transferred to other subject areas.

C. AN EXAMINATION OF THE RESEARCH BASIS

REPORT ON LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ELEMENTARY IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Catharine Keatley

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,4 May*, 1997

What learning strategies do elementary language immersion children use when learning to read in a foreign language? How are these young children able to learn to read when they spend all day in school in a language they have never used before and they do not speak at home? These are questions that the Language Resource Center studied from 1993 through 1996 with the cooperation and participation of the Maryvale Elementary School French Immersion Program and the Rock Creek Forest Elementary School Spanish Immersion Program in Montgomery County, and the Fox Mill Elementary School half-day Japanese immersion program in Fairfax, Virginia.

We conducted think aloud interviews with children in Grades 1 though Grade 4 in each of these schools. As the children read a short passage in the target language, the interviewer (a native or near-native speaker in that language) asked, "What are you thinking? How are you understanding? Why did you do (or say) that?" Their responses revealed rich, complex strategy use among even the youngest students. We used statistical analyses to compare the strategies of students in Grades 1 and 2 (younger students) and Grades 3 and 4 (older students), to compare the strategies of students rated as more and less effective language learners by their teachers, and to compare the strategies of students of different languages (French, Spanish, and Japanese).

We found that children as young as first grade used learning strategies to help them read in a foreign language. Interestingly, the general pattern of learning strategies was similar to the pattern of learning strategy development observed in children learning to read in their first language.

An important difference between more and less effective students was found in the use of decoding. In the interview task, students read texts appropriate to their reading ability in the foreign language: good readers had harder texts than weaker readers. Althought decoding constituted the largest proportion of strategies use for all students, weaker readers worked more at decoding words than stronger readers. This, and other findings, suggest that stronger L2 readers, like stronger L1 readers, pay more attention to the global meaning of texts; and weaker readers pay more attention to decoding single words.

After decoding, inferencing, guessing about information not stated in the text, represented the next most frequently used strategy. All children made inferences based on the pictures, but only older, Grade 3, students of French and Spanish, made a significant proportion of inferences about the story based on what they had already read in the text. The strategy of self correcting errors was also used significantly by students. However, older children corrected themselves more frequently than younger children. On the other hand, younger children made elaborations based on pictures more frequently than older children. The important strategy of prediction was seldom used by students, although older children made predictions based on the pictures more than younger children. Perhaps, this shows the effects of maturity on learning strategies independent of decoding skill.

An important implication of this research for language immersion teachers is that reading strategies for constructing global meaning are an important component in reading instruction for foreign language elementary immersion students. Another implication is that, at least for the teachers in our participating schools, they are doing a great job, the children really are thinking in the foreign language, even the little ones.

LEARNING STRATEGIES DEVELOPMENT IN AN ELEMENTARY SPANISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: AN INDIVIDUAL PROFILE

Jennifer Delett

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,6* July, 1997

From 1994 to 1996, the NCLRC conducted longitudinal research on learning strategies used by elementary school students in Japanese, French, and Spanish language immersion programs. The study addressed two primary research questions: 1) which learning strategies are used by more and less effective learners in elementary foreign language immersion programs and 2) do the strategies change over time, and if so, how?

To answer these questions, the research staff collected data through think-aloud interviews and coded and analyzed the data for general trends in each student's strategies use in the three years. The staff then examined more closely the think-aloud transcriptions of two more effective and two less effective learners for the qualitative characteristics in each year and for changes over the three years, and discussed the results through a case study. The quantitative results of strategies use by more and less effective learners were reported in the May issue of the Language Resource. This article reports on the qualitative analyses by describing the reading strategies use of a more effective Spanish language learner, Clarice (a pseudonym), and identifying the pattern of strategies use that emerged during the course of the study.

The analysis of Clarice's strategies use supports previous research indicating that more effective learners are more knowledgeable about and flexible in their strategies use. Throughout all three years, Clarice used prediction and elaboration appropriately and skillfully, and she used the strategies in increasingly more sophisticated ways with more awareness of why and how to use them. Examples from the study illustrate these patterns in Clarice's strategies use.

Clarice's use of prediction and elaboration was most notable in her preparation for reading tasks. For example, as a second-grader, before reading the story Pájaros en la Cabeza (Birds on My Head), she predicted that the story "puede ser de fantasía" (might be make-believe). It is common for students at this age to demonstrate or indicate that they make predictions about the story based on the title and the pictures. (For example, a student might say upon seeing the title Pájaros en la Cabeza (Birds on My Head) that the story will be about birds or that it will be funny). However, what made Clarice's prediction unique was that it was about the genre of the story, a more meaningful and useful prediction. Her prediction told her much about what might happen in the story. It set the tone and perhaps provided a story structure.

Clarice also elaborated on her predictions. For example, Clarice used prediction to prepare to read a story about a boy and his ant farm. Based on the picture, Clarice made a prediction about the story and elaborated on the situation from the perspective of the boy as well as that of the ants: En este dibujo el niño mira como asustado y también como upset que los, las hormigas están en el piso de su casa y creo que están, está pensando que van a comer toda la comida que se pierda como cuando están comiendo las crumbs. Y él está queriendo esto (In this picture the boy looks like scared and also like upset that the ants are on the floor of his house, and I think that he is thinking that they are going to eat all the food that is lost like when they are eating the crumbs. And he is wanting this). By elaborating on her prediction, Clarice presented possible situations for the characters. This well prepared her for the reading task. In contrast, a less effective student in the study said Sí, de hormigas. (Yes, about ants.) The lack of elaboration may limit the student's preparation for and comprehension of the reading.

Over the course of the study, Clarice continued to use the title and pictures to make predictions about the genre

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of the stories, seeming to know what kind of title was appropriate for a particular genre. For example, she noted: el título me sueña como un explictivo (the title sounds like an expository story to me.). In this case the title was short and straight forward, characteristic of expository material. Although Clarice's predictions were not always correct, she consistently and successfully prepared for reading by considering what might be ahead.

Clarice also expanded her repertoire of strategies over the course of the three years. She began to use more text-based strategies such as inferencing and she began to combine different strategies, using various sources of information. This was most evident in her approach to unlocking the meaning of new words while reading. As the reading tasks became more difficult, Clarice began to use multiple strategies to determine the meaning of new words. For example, in one passage she read: cuando me lo raguelo, rega-lo, rega-ló Pepe (when Pepe gave it to me.) She first made a guess based on the initial letter, and then changed strategies when that did not help. She tried decoding to help her read the word, and she used auditory association to determine the meaning, that is, she corrected herself based on the fact that it sounded wrong. With another text, Clarice successfully tried four different strategies to unlock the meaning of unknown words, demonstrating her flexibility in and understanding of strategies use. Where less effective students would have continued to use the same strategy unsuccessfully, Clarice used decoding, auditory association, background knowledge, and textual inference.

By the third year of the study, Clarice began to take advantage of her knowledge of linguistic structures to comprehend the text. For example, she identified the defense weapon of the boar as los colmillos (the tusks) even when she did not know what the word meant. She came to the correct answer based on her understanding of the colon in the sentence structure: ...el jabalí ataca con su arma de defensa: sus colmillos. (...the boar attacks with his defense weapon: his tusks.)

Clarice also demonstrated her ability to reflect and comment on her use of strategies. For example in using auditory association, she commented that "Because I was listening to my voice and when I looked at the word, I um knew that [it was wrong]". She also explained how she uses the words around a new word to unlock its meaning. "Yo leo las palabras alrededor, y si entiendo todo, you puedo entender la palabra y que está pasando". (I read the words all around the word and if I understand everything, I know what the word is and what is happening.

Clarice was an articulate and creative student whose advanced knowledge of the structure of language and the conventions of literature aided her in the use of high level strategies. She demonstrated flexibility in and understanding of strategies use which facilitated her success in learning Spanish. Before reading each text, Clarice used prediction and elaboration proficiently and in increasingly more sophisticated ways. While reading, Clarice began to rely on her knowledge of the second language and began to combine different strategies effectively to unlock the meaning of new words. Clarice showed awareness of her strategies use; she developed the ability to discuss how and why she used strategies.

From the analysis of Clarice's transcriptions and the other case study data, it can be concluded that the difference between more and less effective learners is not the frequency of strategies use but the type and quality of strategies use. More effective learners, like Clarice, are aware of their strategies use, have sufficient knowledge of strategies, and are flexible and resourceful in their employment of the strategies.

This article is based on the a case study completed in 1996 by Christine Newman.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES USE AND INSTRUCTION ACROSS LEVELS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

Sarah Barnhardt

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 1,11* December, 1997

Learning strategies research conducted at the NCLRC (formerly the NFLRC) has shown that students' use of learning strategies changes over time as students advance through levels of language study. Qualitative case studies of high school students studying Spanish, Russian, and Japanese illustrate how strategies use becomes increasingly complex and varied just as students gain more complex knowledge of the language. The following excerpts from Spanish student think- aloud interviews show such a change in strategy use. The same student, at the given points in her study, was asked to read a Spanish-language text and verbalize her thoughts.

Level 1 High School Spanish Student:
"This looks like a dentist because there's a DDS and my uncle is a dentist and he has that. It says "limpiar dentales" and I know what "limpiar" means so I guess that means to clean your dentures and something about root canals. I guess "canales." Then it says "tratamiento" which I guess means treatment."

Level 2 High School Spanish Student:
"It's a dialogue. There's a conversation between A and B in a dialogue form. I'm looking at the title to know what they're talking about. Some of the words I won't know but if you know what they're talking about, you might get it. It's saying the lady is much older than her husband."

Level 3 High School Spanish Student:
"It's about the chocolate industry and how popular it is now and the importance of it in the past in history. Is that right? That's what I thought. It's saying that this Quetzalcoatl, this ruler, he obviously said that chocolate was important in his empire and there is another thing in here that it has some religious connotation. Where is it? "Origin divino" like a divine origin and so that implies religion and polytheism. So it's saying that chocolate is popular now possibly because it was very important then."

In the above examples, we can see that the student starts out using word-based strategies, such as recognizing cognates, as well as relying on her world experience to verify meaning. As she progresses through her study of the language she builds on these strategies- she continues to use cognates and background knowledge but she expands her strategies repertoire by using text structure and academic knowledge to construct meaning. In level 2 she is translating full sentences and by level 3 she is summarizing the gist of the text and self questioning to see if her summaries make sense. She also increasingly relies on inferencing meanings in the text. Her strategy use has grown with her language knowledge and adapted to the level of text complexity.

As students' strategy use changes across levels, teachers need to be responsive to these changes and adapt strategies instruction to fit students' needs. In interviews conducted with teachers implementing strategies instruction, NFLRC research staff asked teachers for their thoughts on how strategies instruction develops across language levels. The following paragraphs share some teacher thoughts on strategies instruction development.

Teachers suggest teaching a few strategies well in the beginning and then building the strategies repertoire across levels: "If you teach level 1, don't go into all the strategies at once. Keep it basic or you will overwhelm the students. Pick a couple to use at the first level and then add additional ones to level 2 and by level 3 they can have the whole gamut of strategies. Be wise on how you present the strategies and teach them at each level and I

think students can handle them."

Teachers also feel strongly that strategies should be taught to all levels but appropriate strategies may differ across levels: "I like strategies for higher-order intellectual skills for upper levels, because in upper levels we deal with 17 and 18 year old people who need a different approach."

Students at all levels need to understand the metacognitive cycles of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. However, strategies instruction needs to be tailored to the age group of students. Younger students need a concrete, playful model of metacognition and strategies: "What I noticed is with the middle schoolers, grades 5-8, the playfulness is very important. What I'm calling playful pieces are actually kinesthetic support to this concept of metacognition. The mountain climbing example, the simple terms are important. They don't necessarily want to learn the term metacognition, they prefer a simpler understanding of what they are doing. The whole concept of metacognition is important for students at whatever language level and age group and of course you talk about it in different ways.

By the end of a year of language learning which includes strategies instruction, students can be expected to give detailed explanations of their thought processes for learning tasks: "They started to give their thoughts in the 4th term, not much in the 2nd or 3rd term. Now when I ask why, they try to explain very hard, based on what they already know."

Keep strategy terms consistent across levels. Coordinate with other teachers in the program to decide on strategy names and which strategies to teach for the different levels: "We need to use the same names for the strategies from beginning to advanced levels, and we also need to decide which strategies are taught in which levels to avoid overlaps. Teaching them at random is no good."

In multi-level classes, teachers may need to tailor instruction to the different groups. However, students at higher levels can peer teach strategies to the lower levels: "I think I may end up having to teach these different levels in one class and so I'm trying to take a more complex or specific strategy approach to one, two, or three strategies for the beginning level and start to branch out at the advanced level. I wonder if I can run a sort of parallel strategies instruction, peeling off the advanced students into more specific strategies."

The results of the three-year strategy study conducted at the NFLRC indicate that strategies use changes over time and that therefore teachers need to adjust their strategies instruction to suit their students' needs. Although every teacher's situation is different, a few commonalities emerge. Start strategies instruction small and increase the number of strategies taught over time. Students cannot digest large numbers of strategies in a short amount of time. Choose and teach strategies that are suitable for your curriculum and language: not all strategies are needed all the time. Recycle strategies that have been taught over the years so students do not forget. These reminders can be subtle and brief. Finally, if possible, work with other teachers in your school so that you can develop a coherent strategies curriculum to be used in your program. It will give direction and structure to your instruction and increase the benefits students receive from strategies instruction.

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS: HELPING ELEMENTARY IMMERSION STUDENTS READ IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Catharine Keatley

From *The Language Resource, Vol. 2,1* January, 1998

The National Capital Language Resource Center conducted a three-year study (1993-96) of the language learning strategies of students in elementary language immersion programs. The students, in grades one through four, were enrolled in French, Spanish, and Japanese language immersion programs in Washington, DC metropolitan area public schools. The study included use of think-aloud interviews in which children were asked to read and write in the foreign language while describing their thought processes. Questions such as, "What are you thinking? What are you doing?" were used in the interviews. Additional results of this study were reported in the May, 1997 issue of this newsletter.

Based on this study, we have developed a list of strategies that many elementary children use when reading in a foreign language. Along with this list, we have developed a second list of strategies, observed in think-alouds with older and particularly successful students, which we think are similar to the strategies that many of the children already use. We hypothesize that these related learning strategies may be easy for elementary immersion students to acquire because of the similarity to the strategies the children already use. We think that if students are taught these strategies, they may learn to read in the target languages even more effectively. These suggestions are based on hypotheses related to our
empirical data, but not on the data itself.
The think-aloud data revealed that the students used the MONITORING strategy, SELF-CORRECTION, a great deal on the reading task: "Oh, I made a mistake. That's not right." We suggest that the teacher explicitly introduce the strategy of monitoring and then encourage students to use the related strategy MONITORING SENSE by asking themselves "Does this make sense? Am I understanding this?" These questions can be asked directly by the teacher and woven into the lesson. The teacher can also introduce the related strategy of VERIFICATION, consciously checking to see if a previous inference or prediction is correct: "So, was my guess right?" "Did my prediction come true?"

We found that the children spontaneously used the SELECTIVE ATTENTION strategy of paying attention to the picture to help them understand the meaning of the text. We suggest that the teacher may also introduce the strategy of paying attention to the title of a book or story to get clues about the meaning of the text. Only a small number of the elementary children paid attention to the title. The teacher can explicitly teach the word "title," its meaning, how it is related to the book, and how it is linked to strategies such as prediction. This lesson can be broken into smaller, more manageable parts, using simple terminology, especially when younger children are involved.

The children used the pictures very effectively to make inferences about the meaning of the text. We suggest that the teacher may introduce the related learning strategy of INFERENCING the meaning of the text on the basis of the children's world knowledge: "I knew it was the morning because the alarm clock rings...and I know it rings in the morning." We observed that the young children often did not make inferences about the meaning of the text on the basis of information that they did use in practical situations. This, then, is a strategy which children can be taught to apply effectively to reading tasks.

Pictures were also used by many of the children as the basis for PREDICTINGwhat would happen in the text: "He's going to break everything, he looks very dangerous." Students rarely used the title to make predictions

about what would happen in the text. They also rarely made predictions on the basis of the text: "It says it's his birthday.... I think he will have a party." These are strategies a teacher may introduce which should enhance a student's ability to extract meaning from the text. These strategies can be taught explicitly and then re-enforced throughout the year.

The children did a lot of ELABORATING about the text on the basis of the picture: "[The king] travels the world lying in his bed...because there is the world and his bed is in the air." They also made elaborations about the meaning of the text on the basis of their personal experiences: " I've been to the beach too and it is hot and..." A less frequently used learning strategy was making elaborations based on consciously making connectionsbetween different parts of the text: "Oh, so that's where the title comes from." Another useful, but infrequently used, learning strategy was making elaborations based on knowledge of literature or media: "A lot of times the stories are the same, the animals talk..." Consciously using knowledge of text structure and genre can be very useful in improving comprehension in first and second language reading.
Instruction in the conscious use of these less frequently used strategies, which are closely related to more spontaneous and frequently used strategies, may help language immersion students to glean meaning from text more effectively when they are learning to read in a foreign language.

**The NCLRC will be hosting a summer institute on teaching learning strategies June 22-23, 1998. Please contact us for more information. For more information on this study, or for teacher and student materials based on this work, please contact Cathy Keatley or Sarah Barnhard at the NCLRC: <nclrc@nicom.com> ; telephone: 202-739-0607; fax:202-739-0609; or postal mail: 2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 105, Washington, DC 20037.